Barbadian Americans

By Alex Bishop

Barbados was a British Caribbean territory for nearly 350 years. The British settled in Barbados in 1627 with slaves mainly from West Africa. The number of slaves brought over by the British increased drastically after they found out that Africans could work very well in a tropical climate. After the cash crop sugar cane was introduced to the country more Africans were enslaved. At this point the population of African was the dominant race in Barbados. Slave trade was finally banned in Barbados in 1834 and freed from the British Commonwealth in 1966. The first wave of Barbadian emigration to the U.S. was as early as 1901. They emigrated at this time mainly for low paying jobs and various other reasons. The biggest immigration wave was during the decolonization period which was from 1958-1983. Most Barbadians immigrated to the New York Metropolitan area with Brooklyn being the most populated area of Barbadian emigrants. The 1990 census shows that 82 percent of the Barbadian immigrants moved to New York.

  Many Barbadians have contributed to the American culture such as Rihanna, Grandmaster Flash, and Cuba Gooding Jr. I choose the song “Mama Said Knock You Out” by Llcoolj, a Barbadian American rapper. I choose this song because LLcoolj is from New York, which was where most Barbadian immigrants lived. My dad happens to be from the same neighborhood as Llcoolj and they went to the same high school. This just shows how many of them lived there. This song brings the American out of Llcoolj and has contributed to not only American rap, but American films as well. I choose the book “Brown Girl Brownstones” by Paule Michelle because it shows how Barbadians coming to America during the depression were extremely poor. It also talks about how they all mostly lived in Brooklyn. This artist shows how Barbadians have come far and continue to contribute to the American culure.

Llcoolj’s “Mama Said Knock You Out” is a very loud, aggressive and energetic song. It has contributed to American music because Americans are loud and like to be heard. This song is very expressive as Americans are. This song is very manly and many Americans enjoy manly sports like football, and wrestling in which this song is often played in the locker room of these sports. This song is the epitome of expressive and energetic music simply because of the title. This song as well as Llcoolj has contributed to the American culture. Llcoolj since has become a notable artist and icon for American men. The book “Brown Girl Brownstones” by Paule Michelle describes how West Indaian immigrants lived in America. It also shows how it was to be a first generation American, as I am, and the ups and downs to being one. The main goal in literature, as well as any other type of art, is to be unique. Many authors strive to be unique and have their own contributions. Paule Michelle has contributed her experiences as a first generation American to American literature.

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